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UA77/4 Uniting the Spirit, Vol. 1, No. 1

WKU Alumni Relations

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Uniting the Spirit

Society of African American Alumni

Minority Student Support Services

“Shout the Century Out”

With the turn of the century right around the corner, Western is going out in style with Homecoming '99.

Shout the Century Out will be brought to life at the Festival of Friends by Otis Day & the Knights who were the musical stars of the National Lampoon's "Animal House" movie in 1978.

For more information about any event contact the WKU Alumni Association at 1-888-WKU-ALUM. For a complete list of activities look in the Fall issue of the *ALUMNI* magazine or click on www.wku.edu/Alumni

Friday, Oct. 22

Hall of Distinguished Alumni Luncheon and Induction Ceremony Noon ♦ Bowling Green-Warren Co. Convention Center ♦ Tickets are \$25 and can be reserved by calling the WKU Alumni Association at 1-888-958-2586.

Big Red Street Fest 6-8 p.m. ♦ Big Red Way ♦ Children's activities, games, prizes and pig roast.

Big Red's Roar 7 p.m. ♦ Colonnade ♦ The biggest WKU pep rally featuring athletes and coaches.

9 p.m. ♦ Van Meter Auditorium ♦ Sponsored by University Center Board ♦ Contact (270) 745-2459 for ticket information.

9 p.m.-1 a.m. ♦ Parmakers Club at Hobson Grove ♦ Free admission and cash bar.

Saturday, Oct. 23

Society of African American Alumni Tailgate Tent 1-3:30 p.m. ♦ Downing University Center South Lawn ♦ Find out more about the Society and upcoming events.

Hilltopper Football vs. Tennessee State 4 p.m. ♦ L.T. Smith Stadium.

Stepshow 8 p.m. ♦ Diddle Arena ♦ Sponsored by National Pan-Hellenic Council. ♦ For more information call Minority Student Support Services at (270) 745-5066.

Dance 11 p.m.-3 a.m. ♦ Garrett Conference Center ♦ Sponsored by National Pan-Hellenic Council. ♦ For more information call Minority Student Support Services.

Alumni Dance 10 p.m.-2 a.m. ♦ Knights of Columbus Hall ♦ Music provided by the Male Man Band. Sponsored by the Society of African American Alumni.

♦ Various events on campus and at University Plaza Hotel. ♦ Contact John Moore for more information at (270) 745-3594.



Inside Preview

Move over Oprah Winfrey, here comes Tony Davis	page 2
Equipped for new challenges	page 3
Making a difference for today's students	insert
Looking back to help those reaching forward	insert
'Western is still best place to be'	page 4

October 1, 1999 Vol. 1, No. 1

Editor: Sarah Ramsey

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Minority Student Support Services
C.J. Woods - (270) 745-5066
www.wku.edu/Info/Student/Minority/

Move over Oprah Winfrey, here comes Tony Davis

Before he could even comprehend the word "college," Tony Davis knew it was something he was going to do.

"I was told I was going to college my entire life," Davis said. "I feel very blessed to be here."

Davis has never liked school before; however, that changed the day he opened his admissions letter from Western.

"I still carry with me the admissions letter and the scholarship letter," Davis said. "I have them in my dorm room to remind me how lucky I am to be here."

During the Society of African American Alumni's Spring Celebration, Davis was announced as the first recipient of the first scholarship offered by the Society.

Davis, a '99 graduate of Iroquois High School in Louisville, Ky., is using the \$2,500 to pursue his dream of working in the broadcast industry.

"I dream big dreams," Davis said. "The first time I walked into DUC and saw the displays of the Hall of Distinguished Alumni, I said to myself, one day I will be on that wall."

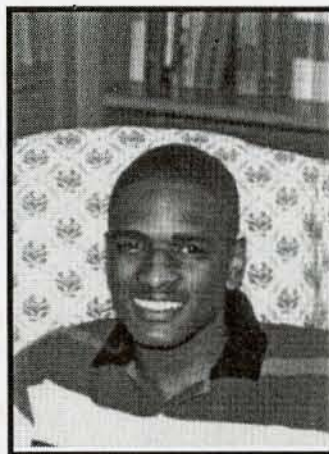
Davis' dream is to host his own entertainment television show. And he knows exactly what it is going to take to achieve his dream. In just his second week on campus, the freshman is already looking for an internship with the campus television station.

"I am looking for exposure early so I can achieve my goal within five to 10 years after graduation," Davis said.

However, before he graduates Davis wants to make a major change on campus. He wants to see the yearbook produced again. According to Davis, several other freshmen

want to see this happen too.

When Davis worked on the high school yearbook staff, they copied some of the styles and formats from old Talismans because the Talisman was considered the best on the market. Once he was on campus, Davis learned that the Talisman no longer exists.



Tony Davis

"Finding out Western no longer has a yearbook has been the biggest disappointment since I've been here," Davis said.

Besides focusing on the yearbook, Davis also plans on joining the Amazing Tones of Joy, the NAACP and writing for the *College Heights Herald* newspaper as well as joining professional organizations in his major.

Davis is also very serious about his studies and found that the classroom size was not what he was lead to believe it would be by various television shows.

"I was surprised by how small the classroom size really is," Davis said. "It is a lot more like high school than I expected."

After two weeks of classes, Davis said he has already learned about the Western spirit.

"I really like the instructors and advisors I have met with," Davis said. "Everyone here is willing to go the extra mile to help someone out. It makes me feel good to be around people who are so motivated." ☺



Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions

Sept. 4 - Oct. 31, 1999

For more information, call (270) 745-2592

Wade in the Water incorporates scholarship in history, ethnomusicology and folklore to show how the musical legacy of slavery and the worship practices of black churches contributed to African American heritage and became a worldwide cultural force.

This exhibit is on display at The Kentucky Museum located on Western's campus courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

"The Negro Musician," May 1921, courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection, Detroit Public Library

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Kappa Alpha Psi Reunion (Epsilon Rho chapter) ♦ Various events on campus and at University Plaza Hotel. ♦ Contact John Moore for more information at (270) 745-3594.



BOY, IS MY FACE RED!

...BUT SOME VITAL SCHEDULE INFORMATION WAS INADVERTENTLY LEFT OUT OF THE MOST RECENT "UNITING THE SPIRIT" NEWSLETTER.

Please use this event schedule to make your plans. Sorry for the inconvenience.

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Minority Student Support Services
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Western Kentucky University
1 Big Red Way
Bowling Green, KY 42101-3576

Looking Back to Help Those Reaching Forward

As with others, I am astonishingly impressed with the efforts of Dr. Ransdell and the Office of Development. The amount of financial gifts and donations raised this year alone will probably exceed any amount Western has raised over a two year period. Equally surprising are the low number of African American Alumni seeking to contribute and positively impact the university. There is a cohort of African American contributors, many of whom are not Western graduates. What does this imply about the University? Are African Americans not connecting positively with the institution? Could Western have done more when you were here? These are debatable questions which do not address the problem at hand.

Undergraduate Western students are in desperate need of local, regional and state success stories emanating from affiliations with Western. It would be refreshing to hear and see the names of prominent WKU African American Alumni plastered on Western buildings and street corners. Yes, it is material, but it is a conversation piece that would be shared with every incoming student when Spirit Masters accompany them on the famous "tour of the hill." Our students will at least know that generations of African Americans have thrived at Western, and their time here is just as meaningful and could lead to great accomplishments as well.

Not all contributions must be of a financial nature, however, joining the WKU Alumni Association does allow us to keep in contact with you. How can you assist? Add your name to the list of donors, earmark funds you want to donate to the Society of African American Alumni or to Minority Student Services, participate in the Spring Celebration, volunteer your services, skills or resources to positively impact the campus culture.

This newsletter is an example of one of the few mediums we will use to keep you up to date on new programs and progress within the Western community. I encourage African American alumni to avail themselves by reaching out to the Society of African American Alumni and Minority Student Support Services. Both organizations are reaching out cooperatively to rekindle the "Western Spirit" that has been absent amongst African American Alumni.

*By C.J. Woods, Director
Minority Student Support Services*



The Spirit Makes the Master

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Western Kentucky University
**ALUMNI
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Making a difference for today's students

What an exciting and progressive year it has been for the Society of African American Alumni. The Executive Committee made a commitment to set forth and successfully complete four major goals: 1) Provide homecoming events to attract African American alumni back to Western; 2) Create a scholarship for African American students; 3) Establish a fundraiser for the Scholarship Fund and 4) Build a role for the Society in the "Outstanding Black Graduates" program.

The Executive Committee for 1998-99 were Marshall Gray, Vice President; Juanita Britt, Secretary; Eleanor Allen; Howard Bailey; Beverly Britt; Melissa Hagan; Thelma Jackson; Zeb Lynum; Don Offutt; Karen Ray; Michael Rives; Dexter Samuels; Roland Shelton; Phyllis Washington; Finley Woodward and C.J. Woods.

Homecoming '98 propelled the Society into a renewed sense of commitment and record participation. The highlights of Homecoming '99 included tailgate activities sponsored by the Society and the annual alumni dance with a live band and D.J. The dance was well attended by more than 250 alumni. The Society used Homecoming '98 as a medium to recruit, inform and contact alumni, thus making this year's goals obtainable.

The first scholarship was awarded to Tony Davis from Iroquois High School in Louisville, Ky., at the Spring Celebration which was the fundraising event for the scholarship fund. The first Spring Celebration was a great success due to the participation of WKU Alumni Association, Western Kentucky University and the Bowling Green/Warren County community. To ensure the continued success of the fund, your financial support is needed. Our fundraising goal for the endowed scholarship is \$150,000 which will provide full tuition each year to a deserving student.

The Society played a role in the "Outstanding Black Graduates" program by hosting a reception for the graduates and giving each a one year membership into the Society. Our presence at this program serves to strengthen ties with young alumni.

With all goals successfully met, the Executive Committee is refocused on expanding our existing goals to reach more alumni by establishing a semiannual newsletter in conjunction with the Minority Student Support Services office. The Society is also in the process of developing social networks in areas with a high concentration of African American alumni which will serve to increase membership and participation of alumni.

This newsletter will serve to keep you informed of our events and activities. I want to sincerely thank all of the supporting alumni, the Executive Committee, the Minority Student Support Services and the WKU Alumni Association for their continued support and contributions. With your help, I am anticipating another successful year and looking forward to seeing all of you at Homecoming '99.

*By Michael Coleman, President
Society of African American Alumni*

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As with others, I am astonishingly impressed with the efforts of Dr. Ransdell and the Office of Development. The amount of financial gifts and donations raised this year alone will probably exceed any amount Western has raised over a two year period. Equally surprising are the low number of African American Alumni seeking to contribute and positively impact the university. There is a cohort of African American contributors, many of whom are not Western graduates. What does this imply about the University? Are African Americans not connecting positively with the institution? Could Western have done more when you were here? These are debatable questions which do not address the problem at hand.

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By C.J. Woods, Director
Minority Student Support Services



The Spirit Makes the Master

Equipped for new challenges



Dr. Monica Burke
Assistant Director

With vestiges of the infamous Desegregation Plan (now referred to as the Kentucky Plan) still looming over several Kentucky Institutions, the WKU's Office of Minority Student Support Services is well equipped to meet the ongoing challenges of consistently retaining African American students.

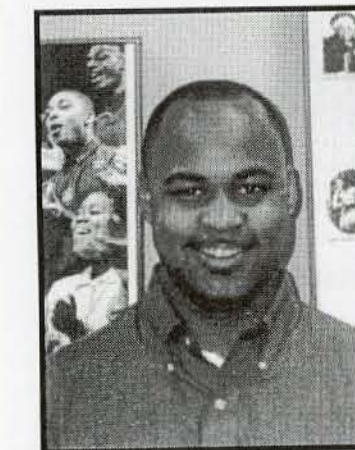
Two recent addition to the staff has renewed a sense of purpose and commitment.

Dr. Monica Burke, the Assistant Director of Minority Student Support Services is not an amateur in addressing the needs of students. Dr. Burke, a native of Columbia, Miss., worked as a therapist, behavior specialist and a trainer for the children services division of Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Services in Hattiesburg, Miss., from 1993-98.

Dr. Burke served as a graduate assistant for the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she earned her master's in Counseling Psychology and Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

"I am well aware of the many issues confronting institutions and minority students attending predominately white institutions," Burke said.

Dr. Burke recalls her transition from Tougaloo College, a historical black private institution located in Jackson, Miss., to the University of Southern Mississippi.



C.J. Woods
Director

"I knew I was equipped to accept the challenges of continuing my education on the master's level, but nothing can quite prepare you for the difference in the campus culture."

Dr. Burke's dissertation researched heavily the relationships between persistence and selected variables that are associated with black students' academic

and social integration, pre-collegiate characteristics, perception of the college environment, and level of institutional commitment.

Dr. Burke's knowledge of retention strategies will prove valuable in assisting Minority Student Support Services achieve its goals.

Tracey Folden has an equally challenging task of establishing a foundation for the Minority Student Support Services tutoring program. As Coordinator of Tutoring, she is no stranger to uncharted frontiers.



Jackie Pillow
Office Associate

Tracey Folden
Coordinator of Tutoring

Folden is a 1995 Western alumna and Henderson, Ky. native who was a track and field standout and state champion at Henderson County High School. Folden's work ethic and determination led to an award of a WKU track scholarship in 1991.

Before returning to Western, Folden worked as a Mental Health Specialist with Lifeskills, Inc. where

she served as the Coordinator of the SEED (Student Excelling in Education Daily) program. Her primary responsibilities included developing and maintaining tutoring and psycho-educational programming for students in grades K-12 in the Bowling Green community.

"I am fully conscience of the impact tutoring can serve to increase retention and minimize attrition," Folden said.

Folden will apply her wealth of work experience to help advance African American student matriculation at WKU.

— By C.J. Woods

Western Kentucky University
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION



A newsletter for African American
alumni of Western Kentucky University

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K.Y. 42101

'Western is still best place to be'

Perhaps the most knowledgeable person on the subject of African American history at Western's campus is Howard Bailey.

Bailey ('71, '73) is the Dean of Student Life and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Since he completed his masters, Bailey has continuously worked for Western except for the one year he was at North Carolina State as an Area Coordinator for Residence Life.

Prior to Bailey starting his freshman year at Western in Fall 1966, African American students were primarily athletes and non-traditional commuters with very few being full time students and living on campus.

With the start of that fall semester, the number of African Americans in the freshmen class outnumbered all of the African Americans already on campus. Bailey contributes this increase to the media attention that Western received because of the men's basketball team featuring Clem Haskins and Dwight Smith.

"A Kentucky college basketball team with three to four African Americans playing was unheard of in the South," Bailey said, "especially because of Adolf Rupp at the University of Kentucky saying that he would not have any African Americans on his team."

This opened the flood gates for African American students to attend Western. The perception was established that if one is not going to attend a Historic Black College or University that Western was the place. Bailey was the first one in his family to attend a predominantly white college.

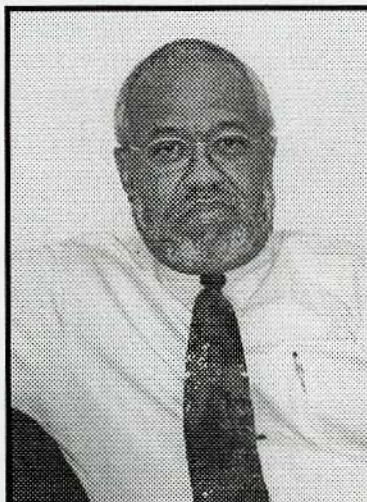
From the mid-60s to late 70s, Western's African American student population was larger than 1200. Western offered a neutral hand of acceptance unlike other state schools where students had their social life restricted and exposed to hostile environments. African American

students chose Western over Kentucky State University for several reasons. Western offered new dorms and campus buildings in addition to a different mind set. Today, the number of African American students at Western is closer to the 900 range.

"Western is still one of the best places an African American can go to grow academically and personally as any place in this state," Bailey said. "We have a rich African American alumni tradition that current students need to know about."

To help the University continue being an outstanding place for African American students, alumni can help by identifying and recruiting African American faculty, staff and students to campus as well as coming for a visit themselves, Bailey said.

"Western and Bowling Green are growing prosperous communities that are compatible to the African American lifestyle," he said. ☼



Howard Bailey
Dean of Student Life

Society Social

Friday, October 8

5 - 7 p.m. (EST)

Join us at the home of **Andrea and Tony Wilson**, 4101 Rainwater Circle in Waterford Subdivision in Lexington, Ky.

For more information call Society President Michael Coleman at (270) 842-5592.